

VERMONT TELEGRAPH.

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BY ORSON S. MURRAY.

"I AM SET FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE GOSPEL."

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VERMONT TELEGRAPH.

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BROTHER MURRAY.

Of the Vermont Telegraph, is making rapid progress in great questions of reformation. He has lately discovered that it is "monstrously unnatural and vastly hurtful" to shave the face or cut the hair; and therefore has left these appendages to his outward man, to take the largest and longest liberty. As the next step of reformation, we would advise him to consider the duty of leaving the nails upon his fingers and toes to grow to their natural length. He may then soon expect to arrive to that high station of an intellectual being, which it was the lot of Nebuchadnezzar to attain, when "he was driven from men, and did eat grass like oxen, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws."

But, seriously, we rejoice to see an anxious inquiry after the truth, and a due independence of the fashions and traditions of men; but when one's researches have led him to a certain extreme, we think it wisdom to pause, and see in what path he stands, and where it leads to.—*Western Citizen.*

And how does brother Eastman, of the Western Citizen, know that I have not already taken what he calls the "next step of reformation?" And what if I have done it? Why, if I have done it in observance of what I deem to be the requirements of physiological law, I am worthy, of course, to be continually faulted and annoyed, and to be written down insane. But if brother Eastman and all the rest of the world should do the same thing in cringing obedience to a tyrannical fashion, it would all be well and right. How long is it since it was fashionable for men to wear their hair long enough for them to sit upon it? The generation is not yet all passed that did it. Not many days since, a man who began upon me quite abruptly, but not unkindly, for the singular length of my hair and beard, stated to me of his own accord before he left me, that formerly when it was fashionable, he at one time had his hair long enough to pass down behind the whole length of his back and then up forward over the top of his waist band. It is still very generally fashionable in this country for females to wear the greatest length of hair they can get. Nobody thinks of finding fault with this, because it is obedience to the tyrant, fashion, that all the world are required to obey. And the obedience is rendered most worshipfully, most scandalously, most shamefully, most degradingly. Suppose the question to be asked—why should women wear their hair? Is not any answer that can possibly be given to this question, equally a good answer to the question—why should men wear theirs? And have all the women who wear this ornament of nature no better answer to give than to say they wear it because it is fashionable?—because the opinions and feelings of others require it? In what a degraded and pitiable condition, then, are women? And men have little or nothing to boast of in this respect. They are the same wretched slaves, serving under the same inexorable tyrant. Every thing goes by fashion, or popular opinion, or public favor. It is one of the principal gods the world worships. Go not to Asia or Africa to find idolatry. Those who go and those who send them, have only another form of it to take the place of that which they would remove. The religion of Christendom, so called, is the most splendid piece of idolatry in existence. A structure of wax, to be shaped by the popular touch. A bubble, blown up and blown about by popular breath. Siding itself to circumstances, times and places. As different a thing now, everywhere and among all, from what it was fifty years ago, as any other fiftieth, ephemeral thing, under the control of fashion. The steeple houses must be built in fashion. The priests must be educated in fashion. The book must be interpreted in fashion. The worshippers must be dressed in fashion. The forms and ceremonies which constitute the worship and the religion itself, must all be performed in fashion. Eating and drinking must go by fashion. If fashion require making the stomach a soap-tub for the deposit of grease and grime, there must be no dissent;—if a sepulcher, to rot dead cattle and dogs in, there must be no demer;—if a laboratory, for the manufacturing of disease, by the use of alcohol, opium, tobacco, tea, salt, pepper, and numberless other poisonous and irritating drugs, there must be no refusal. Then the feet and the lungs must be compressed into proper shape, and the back

bent to a proper angle, at the bidding of fashion. And finally the human head, that masterpiece of all Nature's workmanship, must be cropped, and trimmed, and shaped by the ruthless hands of this relentless monster. I say to the officious, meddling, meddling—off hands—stand back—step aside!

The paragraphs above from the Western Citizen are fair specimens of the arguments I everywhere meet on the subject. "Why do you not allow your nails to grow," is as weighty an argument, in my own estimation as any I have met. And what if I cut my nails? And what if I think that in doing it there is some violation of physiological law? Does it follow that because, for a satisfactory reason or without a reason, any violence is perpetrated, therefore every violence may be perpetrated? Suppose it be conceded to be wrong to cut the nails—and yet they are cut. Does it follow that therefore it will be right to do a greater wrong? Or, on the other hand, suppose it to be acknowledged to be right, under the present circumstances, in our perverted use of our hands, to cut the nails. Does it necessarily follow that it will be right to shear and shave the head? An individual has been in the use of rum and tea. He becomes convinced that rum is too hurtful to be borne with longer, abandons it, and makes known his resolution and practice. His neighbor who continues in the love and use of rum, reads him a homily commencing thus:—"As the next step of reformation, we would advise him to consider the duty of leaving" off drinking tea. Would not this be profoundly and vastly argumentative, in favor of the continuance of both rum and tea?

Brother Eastman says,—"when one's researches have led him to a certain extreme, we think it wisdom to pause, and see in what path he stands, and where it leads to." And what a way to find out where a path leads to! To pause—to stop! To me, it appears the more rational way to travel on. And what is the "certain extreme," beyond which he would have none go? He does not tell. But it is easy to conjecture. It is any point beyond where the "fashions and traditions of men," to use his own language, will allow him to go. Here we have the whole matter in hand at once. It is the same opposition that has always been raised to reform. The same dread of innovation. The same degrading fear of discovery, improvement and progress in scientific and saving truth.

RUSSELL STREETER AND BAPTISM.

I perceive that Russell Streeter, Universalist priest, is out in the Universalist Watchman, attempting to repel my allegation that he has treated baptism with practical contempt. In his attempt at making a quotation, he has not quoted my language as it stood. He says,—"I cannot but regret that any person should be so inconsiderate, as to say, that 'Russell Streeter, of Woodstock, has always treated baptism with practical contempt.'" My language may be found in the Telegraph of August 16, page 178, 4th column, running thus:—"Russell Streeter, Universalist priest in Woodstock, has, during a long administration as priest, practically treated the ordinance of baptism with contempt." I shall not stop to inquire after his motive for making the alteration. Readers can see what it is, and judge for themselves. But how is a priest to set aside or get by the truth of the charge, that he has practically treated baptism with contempt, during the time that he has refused to practice baptism for himself and others? He speaks of the convictions and feelings he has had on the subject. And what has this to do with his practice to the contrary? I brought no allegation as to his convictions or his feelings. I did not say that in these he had treated it with contempt—but that he had done it in his practice.

By the way, does he not condemn himself the more, by as much as he acknowledges his convictions to have been on the side of baptism, while his practice has been against it? Remember he is a priest—a teacher of religion. Now suppose that during his long administration as such, he had practically disregarded chastity—which is no uncommon thing for the priesthood—as he has practically disregarded baptism. Who would think any better of him for a confession that all the way his convictions and feelings had

been contrary to his practice in the case? Who could have as much confidence in him for the future, as if he had formerly lived under circumstances which had prevented his seeing and knowing the superior excellence of purity; and had now most heartily embraced it practically, the moment he saw it? Is it in a man's favor that he has always been stifling convictions and tampering with right feelings?

Let no one suppose I have now been instituting a comparison between the worth of baptism and of chastity. Nothing of the kind. Only an illustration. Taking the man on his own ground. I had laid baptism aside, before Russell Streeter took it up. It will be recollected by those who read my article in the Telegraph of August 16th, entitled "Secism," that I bro't the case of Russell Streeter, among others, to show that the Universalists and the other sects who have heretofore been at antagonisms, are now, like Pilate and Herod, uniting to prevent the progress of reform. Every new development from either side, and from all around, goes to confirm the view I then took of that matter. The last Vermont (Baptist) Observer is billing and cooing with "Rev. Russell Streeter" at a great rate. How long is such a religion to have the ascendancy over honesty, intellect, manhood and goodness?

Rescuing the Sabbath.

A very laudable effort is going on in Charleston, S. C. to promote a better observance of the Lord's day. Memorialists, extensively signed, have been sent to the city authorities, praying for the aid of the police in executing existing laws. A large number of butchers also petitioned that the markets might be discontinued on Sunday. They have accordingly been closed, after having been open on every Sabbath for thirty-five years. This is an example which we hope to see followed in other cities. The preservation of the Sabbath is connected with the purity and permanency of our political institutions, and the securing the existence of a healthy state of morals in the community.—*N. Y. Evangelist.*

South Carolina slaveholders "rescuing the Sabbath."—It is as consistent as the wholesale swindling aristocracy, robbing all around them by hundreds and thousands of dollars, and then punishing the victims of their robbery for taking back a few dollars and cents. Not that I would encourage their victims to take anything violently, or by stealth. But the wholesale operation must not always be kept out of sight by the wholesale cry of the dealers in large matters against those who deal in small ones. Robbery is robbery, whether done under the form of statutes and commands, or against them. They talk about "executing existing laws." And what are the existing laws of South Carolina? They make property, chattels, of human flesh, and rank it with the flesh of four-footed beasts and creeping things—with pieces of lumber and handiwork of dust. Stroud says, "the law of South Carolina may be quoted as follows:—'All negroes, Indians, (free Indians in amity with this government, and negroes, mulattoes and mestizos, who are now free, excepted,) mulattoes or mestizos, who now are or shall hereafter be in this province, and all their issue and offspring born or to be born, shall be and they are hereby declared to be and remain forever hereafter absolute slaves, and shall follow the condition of the mother.'" By this law, any person whose maternal ancestor, even in the remotest degree of distance from him or her, can be shown to have been a negro, or an Indian, or a mulatto, or a mestizo, not free at the date of the law, although the paternal ancestor at each successive generation may have been a white free man, is declared to be the subject of perpetual slavery." The laws are similar in Georgia, Mississippi, and Louisiana. The law of South Carolina chattelizing their human cattle runs and reads thus:—"Slaves shall be deemed, sold, taken, reputed and judged in law to be chattels personal in the hands of their owners and possessors, and their executors, administrators and assigns, to all intents, constructions and purposes whatsoever." The makers, supporters and executors of such laws, rallying to rescue the Sabbath! What then are human laws? The Jews stoned a man to death for picking up sticks enough on their Sabbath to kindle a fire. These same Jews, like the South Carolina Sabbath rescuers, were traffickers in human flesh. The 25th chapter of Leviticus, 45th and 46th verses, reads thus:—"Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they began in your land: and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bond-men forever: but over your brethren

the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigor." In what, I beg to know, does religion consist, but in straining at gnats and swallowing camels? It leaves undone every thing of comparative importance, and employs its devotees at anything and everything else.

NON-RESISTANCE.

The Editor of the Vermont Telegraph is, in our opinion, nearer the truth in his views of the means which ought to be used for the reformation of offences and criminals, than the community in general. With regard to our views of civil rewards and punishments, we answer him, that they ought to be awarded as encouragements to virtue and discouragements to vice, rather than as inflictions of what is called retributive justice. They are to be regarded in the same light as bounties and prohibitory duties for the encouragement of manufactures and the discouragement of certain injurious branches of commerce. The authors of a code of beneficent laws would say to their fellow citizens, There are certain actions, called vices, injurious to the welfare of society, which must be prohibited by assigning what are called punishments to those who are guilty of them. Yet, as these offenders are often more to be pitied than condemned, inasmuch as their bad education and the demoralizing circumstances in which they have been placed, have rendered them necessarily vicious and criminal, we inflict upon them no more than that amount of punishment which is necessary to constitute a motive to deter others from committing similar offences. Vindictiveness is no part of our code.—We would deprive a criminal of his liberty only so far as this deprivation is needful to restrain him from the commission of other acts of vice. Hence penal laws should not exist. All punishments, properly so called, ought to be expunged from the statute book, and their place supplied by restraining laws. But it is an error to believe that these awards should be distributed with reference solely to the criminal upon whom they are inflicted. While we aim to procure his reformation, and to restrain him from doing further evil to society, we aim likewise at making him an example to deter others from following his evil ways.

We agree with the Editor of the Telegraph, that we should regard the feelings and happiness of the poor offender upon whom we are obliged to inflict the penalty of laws. Legislators ought constantly to study the art of modifying the penal code in such a manner as to assign the least possible amount of suffering to the offender, which will serve to restrain him and others from evil doing.—And as fast as the object can be made practicable, we would so modify other laws and customs, and the circumstances of education, as to form habits and furnish motives for well-doing, which should gradually render needless very many of the penalties which are now necessarily assigned to criminal actions. Prevention of crime by reforming the present circumstances of society, would be far better than the punishment of crime after it has been committed; and the rearing up of virtuous citizens is better than filling penitentiaries with prisoners. But we cannot fully elucidate our views of this important subject in the space of a few paragraphs.

The doctrine of non-resistance, we consider a mere phantom of the imagination, and neither benevolence nor justice require the exercise of it. We are so far from recognizing such a doctrine as the means of promoting universal peace, that we believe the attempt to reduce it to practice would have a tendency to encourage disorder and licentiousness. We cannot protect virtue, except by resisting vice; we cannot protect a friend, except by resisting those who are disposed to injure him. If we have a right, therefore, to protect, we have a right, also, to resist, inasmuch as protection, implies resistance. We are willing to banish all hatred and vengeance from our moral creed, but resistance is a law of nature instituted for self-defence, and the individual or the society who should literally and completely refuse to practise it, must soon perish.—We can suppose many cases in which one might be induced to inflict great bodily injury upon a friend, for the sole purpose of protecting another friend from his unjust assault, and all this with no ill will towards the former, but with a sole regard for the safety of the latter. The momentary indignation or anger which one must necessarily feel, when induced to strike a man to prevent him from doing evil, may exist without any enduring ill will against the object; and a benevolent man would use all persuasive means which he could think of, before he would resort to means, which, as they inflict injury, are always apparently vindictive, and often really so.

Any man who should carry the principles of non-resistance thoroughly into practice, would be regarded as insane with enthusiasm. But such a man cannot be found. The Quakers, with whom this singular paradox originated, have never been thorough, practical non-resistants. It is true, that they refuse to study or practice the arts of war and that they refuse to join in war either offensive or defensive. It is true, also, that when attacked by one of the world's people, they walk away, instead of fighting against their antagonist. But if we were to infer from these few

circumstances, and from the fact that the Quakers get through the world better than people in general, that the doctrine of non-resistance carried into their practice is the cause of their thrift and prosperity, we should commit a great mistake. We must consider, in the first place, that although the Quakers will not fight, others will fight for them, and hence, in the case of a national war, though they refuse to protect themselves, yet their fellow citizens protect them. The battle which was necessary to protect their civil and political rights, and to preserve them from slavery and disgrace, is fought, although they refuse to fight it. It is wrong, therefore, to conclude that their security and their enjoyment of their liberty and their rights are evidence of the correctness of their principles of non-resistance. We must further consider that the Quakers in the time of national war, have always essentially though not literally renounced their principles, by aiding and abetting the soldiers among their fellow citizens, by liberally contributing money, advice, countenance and friendly protection and hospitality. If they feed, clothe and protect the soldiery, though they do not fight, they forfeit the title of non-resistants as much in reality, though not in appearance, as if they went out with guns in their hands and shot down the enemy. All attempts to carry the principles of non-resistance into practice will be found to come short of the mark in a similar manner.

We advise these modern enthusiasts to give up this phantom of non-resistance, and take some more rational ground for promoting and establishing universal peace. The peace-maker is never an offender, but he is always a defender. He defends right, and he opposes wrong. If there be any practicable mode of promoting peace, except by doing justice with a benevolent spirit, we are in an error.—*Boston Investigator.*

The Editor of the Investigator speaks of what he calls "civil rewards and punishments." The Editor of the Universalist Watchman speaks of "future rewards and punishments." The subject under discussion in the Telegraph was Rewards and Punishments—all rewards and punishments—without limitation.—To keep the matter clear and plain—in as much as some may see this paper who have not read the Telegraph during the discussion thus far—it may be well briefly to allude to the process by which things have got into their present shape between the Investigator and the Telegraph on this subject. The Investigator made a slight sally upon Non-Resistants, presenting what it evidently considered a case of difficulty for them to solve.—The Telegraph undertook the solution. The Investigator then presented another case directly to the Telegraph, calling in question, beforehand the good sense of the individual who could arrive at a different conclusion in the case from that which the Editor of the Investigator had come to. The Telegraph copied from the Investigator entire, and undertook the solution, expecting its work to be laid before the readers of the Investigator. It would not have expected any such thing as this from a religious or political print.—For these are all devoted to partial interests, one against another, and all against the great common interests of the human family. It is their business to promote their own perverted selfishness, and confine as many as they can to their own narrow views. From the short acquaintance the Telegraph had had with the Investigator, better things were anticipated than have been realized in this matter. For reasons not rendered the Editor of the Investigator has suppressed from the sight of his readers my argument by himself called for before them, and has presented to them the foregoing as his reply to what he has not allowed them to see. Whether his passing judgment against the good sense of my remarks before seeing them or having any means of knowing what they could be, had anything to do with his keeping them away from his readers when they appeared, is best known to himself. In a note in the Investigator for the week following the appearance of my article, he accorded importance to the subject and "ability" to his "opponent"—(the latter not being the thing sought, but a hearing before his readers on what was deemed to be the right side of this important subject)—and deferred his "arguments" a week, when the foregoing appeared. Perhaps it was unreasonable in me to expect a hearing before his readers. Others will judge for themselves, while I proceed to notice some of his "arguments" now presented.

In the course of my remarks on Non-Resistance, I asked the Editor of the Investigator whether he held to rewards and punishments. And if he did, where he placed the discretion. He says, in reply, there should not be vindictiveness—"penal laws should not exist. All punishments, properly so called, ought to be expunged from the statute book, and their place supplied by restraining laws." This is certainly a long step in advance of the theology of the day on the subject. Infidelity is vastly more humane than

religion. All religion is built on violence. It puts in fear. It justifies vengeance in its gods, and of course takes it into the hands of men. Or rather, in my own view of the matter, it establishes itself in the ignorance of men, by going on from what men are, and creating to itself ideal gods like unto them. Edmund Quincy, I think it is, has said that men will not be better themselves than they make their gods to be. It is my own opinion that the character of their gods will quite as much depend on their own character, as their own character or the character of their gods. I believe the real has more to do in forming the ideal, than the ideal in forming the real. It is not inconsistent with this view to allow that men may, in forming to themselves—or rather from themselves—their gods, carry their imaginations of divine character beyond the reality with themselves, for goodness as well as for badness. But the facts will show that in this imaginary work they have not any more transcended human goodness on the one hand than they have human badness on the other.—While on the one hand they sing of mercy and love, in their deities, transcending their own, on the other they portray in them wrath and terrible vengefulness, quite as much exceeding the worst thing ever exhibited in human character. Think of drowning one world of inhabitants, burning up another, and then turning both, and a thousand times more, into a lake of fire and brimstone, to burn and agonize with increasing torment eternally! The religionists who have condescended to themselves such a theory, tell us their deity is unchangeable in all his attributes. All this it is not possible to put together in the exercise of reason. That love and revenge should dwell together in one being, at one and the same time, is as impossible as for light and darkness at the same time to occupy the same space.

To these views I think the Editor of the Investigator will subscribe. But has he not fallen into a measure and a part of the same absurdity and inconsistency, when he protests against "vindictiveness" and "punishments," and yet holds to "flogging," as in his former article? If flogging will be right under some circumstances, imprisonment will be right under others, hanging under others, and so on, to the full measure of vengeance. It is worse than idle and vain for one man to pretend to say he has flogged another, or can do it, without being in the exercise of retributive, punitive, vindictive feelings. Whoever undertakes to say that any such thing is possible, should at once cease to reproach bigoted, demented religionists, for holding to similar things in the doings of their deities. The truth is, no doubt, the attributing of such things to the Source of Goodness, comes from their existence among men. I commend to the Editor of the Investigator an investigation of the case for himself, to know how much modern church and state religion has had to do in giving shape to his present views and establishing him in his present position, touching the point under consideration. This is not meant merely as *argumentum ad hominem*. He is not here brought in proximity with a detestable system for the sake of bringing odium upon him or his cause, in his own eyes or the eyes of others. But I think he cannot object to looking into a mirror.

Let us now look at the idea of "restraining laws," amounting to "rewards and punishments" no further than "to be awarded as encouragements to virtue and discouragements to vice, rather than as inflictions of what is called retributive justice." In what are such laws to consist? What are they to be? The Editor of the Investigator has not defined nor specified—unless his former flogging case is to be taken as an indication of his views. That has just been under examination, sufficiently perhaps for the present.

Whether that is to be taken as an indication of what he would have for "restraining laws, or not, I think he will be in difficulty whenever he undertakes to define. Statutes and commands without penalties are worse than mockery and nullity. They can only debase without power to cure. They can only deprave without any means to renovate. He must be utterly wanting in experience and observation who does not know that threatening without execution is worse than useless. But if penalties are to be annexed and used, then they must be proportioned and suited in kind and degree, to the crimes against which they are to be a restraint. A frivolous penalty attached to an enormous crime, brings the whole proceeding into contempt at once. It places legislators, laws and executors under the feet of criminals. It must be seen that no such distinction can be made as is attempted by the Editor of the Investigator. It is a shadow without a substance. A name without an identity. A word without a meaning. It is like what the priests tell